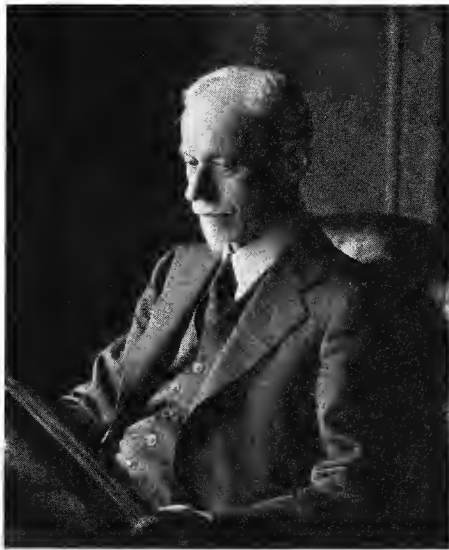


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*The Founder*  
of the  
C. C. F.



JAMES SHAVER WOODSWORTH  
(1874—1942)

*No. 1 of a Series of Critical Studies  
of the C.C.F.*

by  
FRANCIS X. CHAUVIN, M.A.

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## FOREWORD

THIS SHORT sketch of James Shaver Woodsworth was undertaken the day following the municipal elections in Toronto, January 1, 1944.

Until then, and particularly since the Ontario general elections and the federal by-elections of 1943, the C.C.F., despite local reverses in Vancouver and elsewhere, had been absorbed by the adoration of itself. It had drawn its energy from that pride, and its moral strength came from the confidence which its successes inspired. Toronto was its crucial test, and Toronto has nobly taken its measurements.

It is not to be assumed, however, that the dangers surging from the feverish activities of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation are passed. Its program of social and economic reforms outlined recently by Mr. M. J. Coldwell and some of his associates, remains a challenge to the intelligence, and conscience of every patriotic Canadian, no matter what may have been his political affiliations in the past. Our concern, as Canadians, can no longer be over the fate of the Liberal party, or over that of the Progressive Conservative party, but definitely over the future of our country.

Much has been written about the C.C.F. but I do not believe that it has as yet been discovered. The purpose of the present sketch and of pamphlets to follow is to make that discovery. Chesterton once said that the strangest country he had ever visited was England. That may be the case with most of us so far as the C.C.F. is concerned. It is so near to us that it is harder to discover it than if it were more remote, in Germany, in Italy, or in Japan, for instance.

Another reason for our unawareness of the C.C.F. is that we, in Canada, are accustomed to realities and that all the C.C.F. presents to us is a theory. Canadians should, therefore, be careful and remember that Great Wars No. 1 and No. 2 may be traced to the racial theory. Perhaps if the Germans had looked at other peoples as nations in place of races, those two catastrophies would have been avoided. The rapprochement here with the C.C.F. theory is easily distinguishable.

The few facts I relate about the founder of the C.C.F. have been gleaned from a biography by Miss Olive Ziegler.

FRANCIS X. CHAUVIN.

Windsor, Ont.  
January 10, 1944.

**L**ITTLE is known of James Shaver Woodsworth's ancestry. It is said that no records of it are extant. It is known, however, that Richard Woodsworth, of Yorkshire stock, came to Canada in the 1820's and settled in York (Toronto), where he married, in 1831, Mary Ann Watson, daughter of Richard Watson, who had emigrated to Canada from New York, after the War of 1812. Richard Woodsworth and Mary Ann Watson were Mr. Woodsworth's grandparents.

Richard Woodsworth was a building contractor of more than modest means, but he is better remembered as a lay preacher in the Methodist Chapel, on Richmond Street, which was known as the "Cathedral of Methodism". An old brass corner-stone plate still bears, it is said, the name, among others, of "Rd. Woodsworth, local preacher and trustee and builder".

It is also said that Richard Woodsworth was a man of scrupulous honesty, and that he lost practically the whole of his fortune by insisting on paying a note which he had endorsed for a friend. As a result of this misfortune, his sons had to fend for themselves, and the oldest, James, father of our subject, was granted the privilege of entering the Methodist ministry without the formality of attending the theological college. After his ordination, he accepted a charge on the western outskirts of Toronto, where he became acquainted with Esther Josephine Shaver, whom, in due time, he married.

The Shavers had come from Pennsylvania, at about the turn of the eighteenth century, and settled on a farm near Hamilton. Some time later, two of the sons moved to the vicinity of Toronto and carved homes in the beautiful country now known as Islington. It would seem as if James Woodsworth, the preacher, lived with one of the Shavers for a time after his marriage to Esther Josephine, for we are told that James Shaver Woodsworth, the future founder of the C.C.F. party, was born at "Applewood", the old Shaver homestead, in 1874.

As was customary, Methodist preachers were given a new charge every three years, so that Mr. Woodsworth had no opportunity to remember much of his birthplace. In 1882, his parents betook themselves to the untried fields of Western Canada, whereto they were attracted by the spirit of pioneering and the desire to

have a part in "shaping the life and institutions of the new country by the operation of educational, moral and religious forces". After three years at Portage la Prairie, James Woodsworth Sr. was assigned to Brandon, "one of the most progressive towns in Manitoba". Later, he was appointed Superintendent of Methodist Missions of the Western Provinces, a position which caused him to travel extensively, since his territory extended at one time from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean. It was by reason of his knowledge of the geography of Western Canada that it was said of him, "He carried the map of the West in his head."

The founder of the C.C.F. retained to the end vivid recollection of his boyhood days in Western Canada. He was eleven when the second Riel Rebellion took place, and twelve when the leader of the half-breeds was hanged at Regina. One of the experiences which he remembered most graphically was an eight-hundred mile journey to Calgary with his father, by buckboard. He also spoke very attachingly of his parents' home in Winnipeg, where both died, the father in 1917 and the mother in 1925, and which he inherited.

### *Education—Ministry*

James S. Woodsworth was educated at Brandon, and Wesley College, Winnipeg, where he graduated in Mental and Moral Science. After his graduation he was faced with the usual question: "What next?" Much to the satisfaction of his parents, he decided for the ministry. "With me it was not a case of entering the church. I was born and brought up in the Methodist Church and easily found my way into its ministry". In 1898, he entered Victoria College, Toronto, where he studied Divinity, after which he took a year of post-graduate work at Oxford.

It is not improbable that it was at Oxford that J. S. Woodsworth imbibed those principles of economic and social philosophy which were later to be translated into the most advanced form of Socialism ever propagated on this continent. It was at a time when England "was being stirred by humanitarian idealism", and we are told that the "quiet-mannered young gentleman, of literary and philosophical tastes, of an inquiring mind and serious purpose" was washed into the "new currents of thought" then finding their way into the life of the great historic university: the thoughts of Keir Hardie, famous Socialist leader, and founder of the Independent Labour Party (1892), which Ramsay Macdonald and Philip Snowden eventually had to leave because of its radicalism.

Thirty years later, in 1931, Rev. James S. Woodsworth revisited Oxford "where he addressed the University Labour Clubs and various undergraduate groups, and visiting Cambridge, where he spoke to the members of the Socialist Club", (Life of Woodsworth, by Olive Ziegler, p. 20).

Upon his return to Canada, he received his degree in Divinity from Victoria College, and shortly afterwards he started out on the Mission Field in Assiniboia, where he spent one year followed by a brief pastorate in Keewatin, Ontario. From this point, as we shall see, he travelled fast along the path of the Keir Hardie social philosophy.

### *Personal Church*

In 1902, Mr. Woodsworth was called to Grace Church, Winnipeg, "one of the largest churches in the city and of considerable wealth and influence", as associate minister. He served there for four years, but discovering that it was not in him to preach a narrow theology, or "divorce preaching from action", he resigned (1906). He had begun "to doubt the effectiveness of organized Christianity as an instrument" for the accomplishment of a "social order". (Op. cit. p. 22). He took to travelling and went abroad with Mrs. Woodsworth and his father and sister. Among the countries visited, his biographer mentions "the land of Luther". Mr. Woodsworth's letter of resignation from the Methodist Church ends as follows: "I take this step with no feeling of bitterness toward the Church, and no sense of disloyalty to the Master, but with the conviction that I must be sincere at any cost. . ."

In 1907, two hundred and fifty thousand immigrants entered Canada. From 1902 to 1907, the yearly average had been thirty thousand. Most of these immigrants were heading for the Canadian West, and all had to be fitted into the new Canadian picture. Mr. Woodsworth contributed effectively to the making of that picture. Returning to the Methodist fold, he accepted the leadership of a small mission in the North End of Winnipeg (1907). The mission was called "All Peoples", and in it, Mr. Woodsworth was exemplarily "non-sectarian". If performing a marriage ceremony, he would say to the groom: "You can have this woman, but no other woman". He was working his own church, as one of his "foreign friends" one day remarked.

Rev. J. S. Woodsworth spent six years at "All Peoples"! It was during this period that Winnipeg witnessed its first large Socialist demonstration. Carrying the red flag and a banner

"We want work", several thousand unemployed marched to the City Hall. Mr. Woodsworth "saw" and "heard" them, and decided then and there to become a crusader. Accordingly, during 1909, "he wrote for a small Labour paper called *THE VOICE*", a series of articles under the caption, "The Weekday Sermon by Pastor Newbottle." This exuberance was followed by two books "*STRANGERS WITHIN OUR GATES*" and "*MY NEIGHBOUR*". He had become a "preacher-teacher". One day he was talking to one of his flock: "Are you a Doukhobor?"—"No, me no Doukhobor, me drink, me swear, me Canadian."

From a preacher-teacher, Mr. Woodsworth widened into a social worker. He organized leagues of social workers and associations of charity. He also organized (always in Winnipeg) a branch of the Workers' Educational Association, and his home was made the center of it. Surrounded by all these various "interdenominational" activities and services, "All Peoples" had become a veritable Bureau of Information and Help for the immigrants. Mr. Woodsworth described himself, at the time, as "business manager, promoter, publicity agent, collector, clerk and messenger boy all rolled in one". In 1909, the idea came to him of a People's Forum. It was *presto* launched, and the idea spread rapidly. In 1916, there were no fewer than five such Forums in Winnipeg.

It was during the period between 1912 and 1916 that Rev. Mr. Woodsworth became officially associated with organized labour. He reached the Labour Council via one of his organizations, the Ministerial Association, and the Manitoba Commission on Technical Education via the Labour Council. From then on, the Labour movement became the Woodsworth movement and democracy took on a new meaning. In the latter year mentioned, namely 1916, Mr. Woodsworth openly voiced his opinion to the National Service registration plan of the federal government and said that "conscription of material possessions should in all justice precede an attempt to force men to risk their lives and the welfare of their families". He was at the time a member of the "Bureau of Social Research", created by the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta for the purpose of initiating a study of community problems. Shortly afterwards, the Bureau was closed and Mr. Woodsworth found himself without employment.

### *Vancouver*

This was in June, 1918. His opinions on war, even War against Prussianism, had blocked almost every avenue of activity to Mr.

Woodsworth. He was helpless; and when he found himself in Vancouver, almost penniless, with health not too robust, and without work, his outlook on life began to move more towards bitterness.

He sauntered towards the city docks and quietly mingled with longshoremen. He was anxious to work, but he had no Union card. He secured one by acting as a nurse for the dying business agent of the Longshoremen's Union. Now he could work!

Once more, he saw life in a new light. That he, an examiner who had left the cloth because he wanted to be "sincere" at any cost, he, a successful social worker who had left his missionary work to accept a lucrative government job, he, an eloquent crusader who had crossed the country and the sea on errands of social redemption, that he should find himself on the Vancouver docks loading sacks of Chinese rice on trucks, or unloading Japanese oranges from an Oriental liner, was a glaring anomaly, a crying injustice. He consoled himself by musing, and planning!

In an account of his experience in Vancouver, Rev. Mr. J. S. Woodsworth—now a longshoreman—tells us that as he handled the rice sacks he recalled Sir John Willison's warnings against Socialism. "He does not believe that progress will appear except through individual initiative—that the world will take its slow way to the uplands—". And Mr. Woodsworth continues: "Sir John's eloquence moves me not! One—two—three—four (he is loading sacks and counting them)—Sir John fails to understand the workingman's psychology! Sir John still believes in the existing system. The workingman has ceased to believe in it."—Perhaps if Socialism were applied, there would be no need of loading sacks of rice? Perhaps if "individual initiative" disappeared, rice would not have to be imported from China? Mr. Woodsworth does not yet actively approach those questions. He muses!

Another experience: As

"a cargo of Japanese oranges was being unloaded from an Oriental liner—a number of cases were broken up, some accidentally, some carelessly, some *intentionally*. The little golden balls frequently rolled to the floor under the feet of the men and horses. The freight handlers had a chance to quench their thirst and enjoy Christmas before they came to the market—and all without money and without price.

"These little Japanese oranges opened up the whole question of class ethics—If the law allowed the big man to *steal from the* consumers on a wholesale scale, why shouldn't an employee take advantage of his opportunities?—We need a new conception of life and a new social order. Among our native tribes one did not

steal from another. When he had need he took and the other gave. It is under so-called civilization, with its keen competition, with its callous disregard for human welfare, that stealing has developed. Stealing is a symptom of a deep-seated social disease.—When society becomes a big family, the little chap will not need to steal a morsel from his big brother. There will be enough for all and to spare". (Quoted by Miss Ziegler, Op. Cit. p. 85).

### *Labour Activities*

The Federated Labour Party of British Columbia was among his favourite organizations in 1918, and he became one of the regular speakers at the propaganda meetings of that party, held on Sunday evenings in various theatres in Vancouver. His main theme was that the Labour Movement must become the vehicle for "the continual surrendering of individual interests to the furtherance of the interests of the masses. It must be understood as much more than a mere party; it was a growing tide of *social democracy*, international in scope and based fundamentally on principles of justice". (Idem, p. 86). This was also the subject-matter of his articles in the *B. C. Federationist*, the official Labour newspaper.

Mr. Woodsworth neglected no angle that might establish his popularity in Vancouver. It was there that, in a moment of oratorical effusion at a labour meeting, with a chart on "Immigration" before him, he coined the term "co-operative commonwealth", engrafting into it the already existing word "federation". It was there also that he launched an extensive youth educational programme. He wanted the children to have an "understanding of the workaday world in which they lived or of the economic system of which they were a party, and, in many cases, of which they were the victims". Sunday afternoon classes for children were started, and the lessons in "economics" given there were supplemented by articles in a special section in the *Federationist*. Mr. Woodsworth's biographer holds that if these articles were collected, they "would make an excellent primer of economics for use in Canadian schools". The Mounted Police thought otherwise, and Mr. Woodsworth's files containing most of his "innocent and delightful talks" to children were seized in a raid on Labour headquarters in Vancouver. The Mounties were searching for seditious literature.

### *Mission Work*

During all the time Mr. Woodsworth was working, or setting up a labour machinery at Vancouver, Mrs. Woodsworth and the children were at Gibson's Landing, some twenty miles north. In



the summer this "little shelf on the Pacific Coast" was a busy resort, but at other times of the year, it was just another community of about "one hundred and forty families" of mixed character. Mr. and Mrs. Woodsworth had drifted there in the spring of 1917, after the Winnipeg débâcle.

In this little Methodist Mission, Mr. Woodsworth, who "could never separate spiritual values from the ordinary, every-day life of the people," became co-operatively-minded. Apparently, there lived at Gibson's Landing, engaged in business, a Methodist believer in private enterprise who had been in the community from its early days. He had, after years of pioneering, established a general store and everybody was his customer. Mr. Woodsworth came to the conclusion that Mr. X was too prosperous and formulated a plan to oust him by promoting a "co-operative store"—"co-operation for the good of the whole community as against the interests of one individual". However, Mr. Woodsworth had not taken time to learn that Mr. X had been, and still was, a benefactor to the community. Hence, this complaint from Miss Ziegler (Op. cit. p. 76):

"By the end of the year a letter, presumably from the whole circuit, but in reality from this individual alone, went to the Conference asking for Mr. Woodsworth's withdrawal. The Conference felt that it could not refuse this request. Not even in an obscure mission was Mr. Woodsworth permitted to continue his work".

So, Mr. Woodsworth took himself to Vancouver, but Madam Woodsworth stayed at Gibson's Landing where, "in order to assist with the family finances," she engaged in teaching school. We have already learned of Mr. Woodsworth's activities in the B. C. metropolis. However, World War No. 1 had by now come to an end and work in Vancouver was becoming slack. It was at exactly this moment of oncoming distress that "there came to Mr. Woodsworth an invitation from Winnipeg to make a tour of Western Canada in the interests of the Labour Movement . . . in an effort . . . to pull together the forward-looking forces". The account of this tour is summarized by Miss Ziegler in two lines: "He was received in many places with genuine interest and goodwill, and evidently was winning a distinctive place for himself in the ranks of Labour". He was heading straight into the famous Winnipeg strike, June, 1919.

### *Winnipeg Strike*

Mr. Woodsworth reached Winnipeg during the third week of the strike. On which side he would throw the weight of his in-

fluence made doubt for nobody. Services in the city were paralyzed and the atmosphere seemed filled with the breath of revolution. Dissatisfaction and unrest permeated the ranks of labour, who had become dangerously demonstrative, and feelings of unmitigated anxiety and fear were swelling the hearts of thousands of peaceful citizens. Mr. Woodsworth plunged right into the fray with the spoken and the written word. A few days after his first speech in Victoria Park, June 9th, 1919, he wrote: "The general public is up in arms. They have suffered inconvenience and loss—" but it "has not been innocent. It has been guilty of the greatest sin, the sin of indifference". One month later, a lawyer of Winnipeg wrote of the same meeting as follows: "I have never seen an audience drink in the gospel of Socialism so eagerly, a condemnation of the existing social and industrial system and their status in the system, a demand that the workers be given a large share in the control of industry".

A few arrests followed, and among the labour leaders apprehended was the editor of the "*Strike Bulletin*", the Rev. William Ivens. Mr. Woodsworth replaced him and rigorously campaigned for a policy of "no yielding". One week later he himself was arrested, on a charge of seditious libel, and sent to jail. However, by this time the strike was crumbling, for the strike funds were exhausted and the majority of the workers' families were facing starvation.

The strike ended, and himself out of prison, Mr. Woodsworth undertook a Dominion-wide campaign to finance the trial of eight strike leaders charged with seditious conspiracy, and his own trial, and that of Fred Nixon, on charges of seditious libel. He spoke to Trades and Labour Councils in nearly every large city in the West and Ontario. His slogan was "One day's pay for Liberty", and his gospel, "Labour must take its place in Politics". According to Miss Ziegler, the campaign had left him "worn and almost shabby". However, sufficient "bonds" had been sold to defray the trial expenses. Seven of the eight strike leaders were sentenced to one year each, but the libel charge against Mr. Woodsworth was dropped.

### *Vancouver Again*

In the summer of 1920, Mr. Woodsworth was once more in Vancouver, with his family. His position was not very hopeful. Here's how it is described by his biographer: "He had been forced out of a government position on the conscription issue and de-

nounced as unpatriotic. He had resigned from the Methodist ministry and was considered outside the pale of the church. He had been forced into the ranks of labour and had lost his professional standing. He had been a leader in what was regarded as a revolutionary strike and was thought to be a Bolshevik. He had been in jail, charged with sedition. With all his education, professional training and experience he could not now have obtained a place even on the waterfront. Yet he had to live, begin once again, and *help support his family*". (The italics are this writer's).

In a situation of this kind, there is only one thing to do for a man with a gift for oratory, it is to talk. That is precisely what Mr. Woodsworth did. He cast for ever aside the menial job of longshoreman, and "took up his work of teaching and lecturing in the interests of the Labour Party and of the Socialist Movement in general" (Op. cit. p. 110). He ran for the B.C. legislature and piled up an impressive vote, though defeated. But he kept on talking, and teaching and lecturing.

In the summer of 1921, he was called to Winnipeg to become General Secretary of the "Labour Church". Mr. Woodsworth undertook this work in earnest, and since he was secretary of a "church", he wrote an inspiring prayer, which ended with the following orison: "May our faces be toward the future. May we be children of the brighter and better day which even now is beginning to dawn. May we not impede, but rather co-operate with, the great spiritual forces which, we believe, are impelling the world onward and upward." In this long prayer which began: "We meet together as brothers and sisters of the one big family," and which fills one page and a quarter of an in-quarto volume, not once is the name of God mentioned.

### *In Parliament*

In the December of 1921, the Dominion elections were held. That was probably the occasion referred to by Mr. Woodsworth, in his prayer, as "the better day which even now is beginning to dawn". In any event, he was tendered the unanimous nomination of the Independent Labour Party in Winnipeg Centre and won with a handsome majority. It should be kept in mind that Mr. Woodsworth was not the nominee of the Labour Party, but of the Independent Labour Party. The former is conservative, the latter radical. The I.L.P. has given way to the C.C.F.

The first session of the House of Commons attended by J. S.

Woodsworth, M.P. for Winnipeg Centre, opened March 22, 1922. Although he was heralded as a Labour member, the event was scarcely noticed. That was because there had been many representatives of labour—and holders of Union cards, if you please—in previous parliaments. However, because of the occurrence in Winnipeg which had preceded Mr. Woodsworth's election, some significance was attached to his presence in Parliament. One paper said that the House would listen to contributions "likely to prove worth hearing".

Mr. Woodsworth spent much of his first session learning the rules of procedure in the House. In this he proved to be a very adept student, and when a colleague joined him as representative for Calgary East, shortly afterwards, he was able to instruct him in all the arts and artifices of the subtle parliamentarian. That colleague was William Irvine.

### *Class Wars*

The entry of Woodsworth and Irvine in the House of Commons marks the beginning in Canada of class wars. From the day Mr. Woodsworth entered political life as a Member of Parliament until the day of his death, every minute of his existence was devoted to making Labour a political force: "I believe now that I am really the only professional politician," he once said, "since the lawyers go back to their law offices, the farmers to their farms, but I have no other job but that of carrying on an educational campaign for Labour from one end of Canada to the other." This campaign was predicated on this proclamation: "So far as Labour is concerned, Socialism is the economic doctrine of the Labour movement." (Op. cit. p. 154).

In his first parliamentary speech, Mr. Woodsworth spoke as follows:

"Mr. Speaker, our group in this House is small and inexperienced, but we feel that we represent a section of the community that is of no small importance, and that in connection with the debate we should try as best we may to represent the thought of that section of the community on the various public questions which have come before the House."

At each session after that, he made it a point to interject into the discussion on any bill before the House some aspect which would afford an opportunity to press forward the projected "fundamental changes in our economic system from the viewpoint of Socialism. This has had considerable influence, for it has meant that members have been challenged again and again to consider a socialist solution for national problems". (Op. cit. p.

161). The idea was to insert into the pages of Hansard as much of the doctrine of Socialism as possible, since "reports of the debates soon found their way to home constituents and caused searchings of heart as to the views of the local member". (Idem).

### *Labour Recognition*

Now, recognition of Labour was not, in Canada, the outcome of Socialist propaganda, nor was interest in industrial problems initiated by Socialist apologists. A federal Department of Labour was established in Canada, as early as the year 1900, when the country was in its infancy as a manufacturing nation; and the first "Fair Wages Resolution" providing for the payment on government work of the current wages of competent workmen was passed even earlier than that, in 1898. The settlement of labour disputes by compulsory arbitration was another question that did not await the advent of the C.C.F. to be translated into legislation. This was done in 1908. Prior to that, in 1906, at the instance of Canada, England had passed a law prohibiting the inducement of men to come to Canada as strike breakers. We might also mention the subject of working hours as an instance where the concern of government authorities in Canada preceded by a quarter of a century the appearance of sociological theorists on the scene. This list of enactments on behalf of Labour could be extended ad infinitum. Commenting on the progress of Canada in matters of labour legislation, Dr. Charles W. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard University, wrote in an article "*Prophecies of Industrial Peace*", published in 1924; "When one considers all the activities of the Department of Labour at Ottawa before and since the enactment of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, one sees clearly that the Canadian action on the labour problem has been and still is the most intelligent and successful in the world".

However, Dr. Eliot's opinion notwithstanding, whatever had been accomplished in the past in the way of Labour legislation could not possibly, in the eyes of Mr. Woodsworth, fit in "our" new age. The past represented such obsolete terms as "my country first", "rugged individualism", "competition". The present must represent such phrases as "humanity first", "integral collectivism", "national planning".

### *Socialist Propaganda*

Mr. Woodsworth never wavered in his advocacy of the Socialist doctrine. If at times, in the House of Commons, he should feel

discouragement creep over him, he would retire to the seclusion of his chambers and there seek solace in his surroundings. For Room 616 was the storehouse of Socialism in all the forms that it may graphically manifest itself: statuary, paintings, literature. Fraternizing on shelves and pedestals were Savonarola and Hardie, Debs and Agnes Macphail, Rousseau and Adam Smith, Bellamy and Karl Marx: busts and books, sculptured figures and coloured photos, memos and mementos. Among the mementos were "a large sharp-pointed hook with wooden handle", reminiscent of longshoring on Vancouver docks, and "a heavy wooden baton", suggestive of police authority. Another was the picture of a group of figures, one being a colossus, stripped to the waist and standing behind his wife and child. That picture was called: "The Striker".

But Mr. Woodsworth could not be content in a world of inanimate objects, however comforting in many respects. What he wanted was principles personified in living beings. His first excursion in a field not specifically labelled "Labour" occurred in 1924, when he succeeded in forming an alliance with a group of sixteen Progressives who were not in sympathy with their main body of sixty-five members, representing largely the agrarian interests of the country. The bulk of the Progressive deputation had given its support to the government then in power as a result of enactments aiming at equalizing the costs of farming with those of industry (1922). Moreover, the same government had announced its programme of social legislation, which was to include measures to safeguard the interests of the consumer, to improve the status of the wage-earning population, and to assure security to the aged. The entire programme had definitely rallied to the government the majority of the Progressives, but Mr. Woodsworth was so anxious to enlarge his own group of adherents that he was prepared to drop his identity and agree to constitute himself a member of the "Co-operating Independents". As a matter of fact, the group was actually referred to as the "Independents" until the formation of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in 1932. Mr. Woodsworth had dropped his title but not his socialist doctrine.

### *Nucleus of C.C.F..*

It was this group of Co-operating Independents who became the founders of the alphabetical political party known as the C.C.F. At a meeting held in Room 607, May 26th, 1932, it was

moved, seconded and carried that a committee of the group be formed to draft a "tentative plan of organization for future action". This committee was composed of J. S. Woodsworth and R. Gardiner.

At that time, not only Canada, but every country in the world was giving serious evidence of dissatisfaction with the existing economic order as well as disclosing alarming symptoms of social unrest. It was quite clear that we had reached a period of inevitable transition, when reforms in the existing order would have to be introduced if our traditional philosophy of government were not to be thrown overboard. This did not mean that the values of our institutions should be completely discarded and that the extremes in innovation should be attempted, but it did mean that some evolutionary method of social reconstruction must of necessity be discovered.

In Canada perhaps more than in most countries, evolutionary processes of reform are concomitants of her geographical position and of her political and cultural relationships. No sane person can argue against our dependence upon foreign markets or against our relationships with all civilized countries as the basis for social progress. Because of these factors, Canada cannot seek isolation. She must, on the contrary, apply all the faculties of adaptation. Only by adhering to a policy of honourable compromise can she hope to maintain her status as a free nation. All this is as true today as it was in 1932—when the C.C.F. was born, and it will be true tomorrow.

### *Birth of C.C.F.*

The committee of the Co-operating Independents mentioned above set to work immediately and with vigour. There already existed throughout the country provincial and local organizations which might be advantageously approached with a view to considering the advisability of forming a third political party whose activities would extend throughout the whole country. In the prairies there were the United Farmers of Alberta and the Saskatchewan section of the United Farmers of Canada; and in the east, the United Farmers of Ontario, though now inactive as an entity, offered a working nucleus of potential value. Above all, there were the widespread Labour organizations represented by the Trades and Labour Councils, and the out-and-out Socialist organisms still functioning under various names. All these groups were contacted in the course of a few weeks following the Ottawa

meeting of May 26th, 1932, but it was the west which gave the best hopes as a field for immediate action.

Four successive conferences were held at which discussions on political organization on a Dominion-wide scale were carried on. The U.F.A. met at Edmonton in June (1932), the U.F.C. and the Saskatchewan Independent Labour Party met jointly at Saskatoon in July, and then followed the important Calgary conference of the following August where a provisional National Council was set up and where it was decided to hold a national Convention at Regina in July, 1933. The Regina convention was the most important of these conferences, and we shall review its deliberations later on. In the meantime, a quotation from Miss Olive Ziegler's book, published in 1934, will be of interest. It will show that the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation was really the work of one man, James S. Woodsworth, and that the C.C.F. Socialist doctrine is the concrete expression of its founder's views and policies.

"The idea of organizing on a Dominion-wide scale is obviously the only new feature in this proceeding. Most, if not all, of the ideas and policies which were soon to form the official programme of the C.C.F. had been advocated by Mr. Woodsworth and the members of this group (the Parliamentary group which met at Ottawa, May 26th, 1932) ever since their entrance into the House. Some of the members have kept up a steady barrage of socialist principles within the House for as many as twelve years; some throughout the country for an even longer period. The formation then, of a third political organization, in which members of Farmer and Labour groups and of the business and professional classes could unite to make these ideas effective in the national field, was the culmination of a long process of education, and not a spasmodic effort or a momentary flare of enthusiasm." (p. 185)

### *The Founder's Stamp in C.C.F. Policy*

It is natural and logical that the character and stamp of the founder of a political party should be reflected in the general policy and outlook of that party. This is a historical tradition from which there was no material departure in the case of J. S. Woodsworth and the C.C.F. However, there exists a fundamental difference between the C.C.F. and the other old-line political parties of Canada, the Conservative and Liberal parties. The old-line parties were born of principles mutable in their character and flexible in their application. Their essential feature is adaptability to conditions as evolved by social and economic progress. But they are immovable in their attachment to institutions which guarantee man the full exercise of his natural freedom and the full development of his personality. On the contrary, the basic



characteristic of the C.C.F. is the immutability of its doctrine. Socialism does not belong to any country, or to times, or to conditions. It is universal, unconcerned with time, irreverent of conditions. It has no heritage, therefore respects neither institutions nor persons. It recognizes that human society "is not static", but utilizes knowledge and science only to subordinate the individual to the State, or to the species. Socialism is *per se* a negation. It is the negation of freedom, because freedom is a supernatural gift, and Socialism rejects the supernatural. It is the negation of personality for the same reason.

The C.C.F.—or Socialism—is so definitely a negation that it will even reject the above synthesis of its essence. But were Mr. Woodsworth still alive, he would not disallow his creation. He never admitted that there could exist in his theory anything of a spiritual nature.

### *Regina Convention*

The Regina Convention of July, 1933, was an attempt to swing public opinion toward the left. For fourteen years, Mr. Woodsworth had laboured, in and out of Parliament, to create a new mentality, to build a new conception of government. He was now witnessing his educational campaign coming to fruition. A dogmatist hardened by years of bitter experiences, he no longer regarded himself a prophet in the wilderness but a leader triumphantly accredited in a roseate political environment.

Already some indication of a new trend of political thoughts in some sections of the population was evident in the number of clubs that had sprung up from one end of Canada to the other, for the purpose of studying political, social and economic questions, and in the prominence in those clubs of the professional classes. One important organization was the League for Social Reconstruction, founded in January, 1932, which had active groups in Toronto and Montreal. This league was composed chiefly of University professors, teachers, doctors, nurses, and social workers, and its object was to discuss problems and policies of nation-wide importance. Although not affiliated with the C.C.F. the L.S.R. asked Mr. Woodsworth to become its honorary president, an offer which was promptly accepted. The league was of invaluable assistance to the C.C.F. by the publication of a series of pamphlets on subjects akin to the reforms advocated by Mr. Woodsworth. The drafting of the famous C.C.F. Manifesto is largely due to it.

The Regina Convention was attended by one hundred and thirty-five delegates, representing all the provinces of the Do-

minion except the Maritimes. It was fully reported by the Canadian Press, and nearly all the leading newspapers of the country gave it front page publicity. Mr. Woodsworth was elected President of the Convention, and his address in that capacity contained the following:

"... The C.C.F. is undoubtedly a movement of protest born of the discontent of our time; a disgust at the inefficiency of the old parties, and the inadequacy of their policies. But it must be recognized that a merely negative position will get us nowhere. We must develop both a philosophy of life and a constructive programme. Thanks to the pioneers in the Socialist and Co-operative movements, we have at least the fundamental principles on which we may base our teaching with regard to the Co-operative Commonwealth. We do not believe in unchanging social dogma. Society is not static. Knowledge grows, and each age must work out a new and higher synthesis. Such growing knowledge is dependent upon experience and action.

"Perhaps it is because I am a Canadian of several generations, and have inherited the individualism common to all born on the American continent; yet with political and social ideals profoundly influenced by British traditions and so-called Christian idealism; further with a rather wide and intimate knowledge of the various sections of the Canadian people—in any case, I am convinced that we may develop in Canada a distinctive type of Socialism. I refuse to follow slavishly the British model or the American model or the Russian model. We in Canada will solve our problems along our own lines. We have a goodly heritage, not only in natural resources but in pioneer traditions and social equipment. If we have the spirit of our fathers we can overcome the difficulties even of our complex modern world.

"The C.C.F. advocates peaceful and orderly methods. In this we distinguish ourselves sharply from the Communist party, which envisages the new social order as being ushered in by violent upheaval and the establishment of a dictatorship. The decision as to how Capitalism will be overthrown may of course not lie in our hands. Continued bungling and exploitation, callous disregard of the need and sufferings of the people, and the exercise of repressive measures may bring either a collapse, or riots, or both. But in Canada we believe it possible to avoid the chaos and bloodshed which in some countries have characterized economic and social revolutions.

"We are confident that we are in the line of progress—that time and tide are with us. If our movement is to be successful it must bear—as we think it does—something of the character of a religious crusade. Only thus can we overcome the danger of being swayed by personal ambition or by the hope of immediate success. Only thus can we rally the masses to struggle for a better future for themselves and their children.

"Before us lies a great opportunity. May we be equal to our task!"

The complexion of the delegation to the Regina C.C.F. Convention is only partly mirrored in the Manifesto that issued therefrom, a 14-point document of unmitigated revolutionary character. The fact is that a large proportion of the representatives were advanced radicals and doctrinaires who were induced to accept compromises only on the understanding that their views would

eventually find a place in the C.C.F. programme. One of those views was the Communist procedure of reform by violence, which was rejected. Only the tact and patience of Mr. Woodsworth and Mr. Garland prevented the splitting of the convention into opposing camps, over the "means of establishing the new order."

### *New Order*

This "new order" was described in the first section of the C.C.F. programme:

"The establishment of a planned, socialized economic order, in order to make possible the most efficient development of the national resources and the most equitable distribution of the national income".

In the preamble of the Manifesto, the general aims of the C.C.F. were defined in no ambiguous terms:

"We aim to replace the present capitalist system, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated, in which economic planning will supersede unregulated private enterprise and competition, and in which genuine democratic self-government, based upon economic equality, will be possible".

The Manifesto further stated that the present social and economic order of Canada—and the world, by implication—was marked by glaring inequalities of wealth and opportunity, by chaotic waste and instability, and that it condemned the great mass of the people to poverty and insecurity. Power had become more and more concentrated in the hands of a minority of financiers and industrialists, and to their predatory interests the majority were habitually sacrificed. When private profit is the main stimulus to economic effort, the Manifesto continued, our society oscillates between periods of feverish prosperity in which the benefits go to speculators and profiteers, and of catastrophic depression, in which the common man's normal state of insecurity is accentuated. It concluded with an emphasis on the C.C.F. belief that these evils can be removed only by a planned economy in which Canada's natural resources and the means of production and distribution are owned and operated by the people. (This language is fully in accord with Socialist rhetoric).

These principles, of course, were the fundamental principles of the C.C.F. They have never been altered, and never will. Indeed, there may have been superposed some details to meet special unforeseen conditions, wartime conditions for example. As a matter of fact, the present war (Mr. Woodsworth opposed in Parliament

Canada's declaration of war against Germany in 1939) has furnished the C.C.F. with new objectives, v.g.: 1. complete control of all war industries (already in effect); 2. a democratic military policy eliminating all class and race distinctions in the armed forces; 3. education and training of demobilized soldiers, and maintenance at a decent standard of living until established in jobs (plans along those lines long since outlined). The Socialists claim that Canada's astounding productive capacity for war purposes is the result of planning. Therefore, they propose to use the experience in planning gained during the war to maintain and extend the economic controls in peace time. In other words, the C.C.F. has taken occasion of the war to blast away at capitalism. They say, in the words of one of their cicerones, Eric Estorick,:

"Since the Canadian people have come to accept the boards and controls which cover all phases of Canada's economic life and have seen as one of the direct results the production of great quantities of goods, regardless of their profitability, it is obvious that they will not accept a return to business as usual without protest".

### *C.C.F. On The Move*

The first convention over, Mr. Woodsworth—now "democratically" confirmed in his national leadership of the C.C.F.—strove to give it momentum by developing local leadership. A steady educational propaganda was vigorously carried on by the National Executive, especially by Mr. Woodsworth himself, Mr. Gardiner, Mr. Irvine, Mr. Garland and Miss Agnes Macphail, and a considerable amount of organizing was done. Just at this time of feverish activity, there were held throughout Canada several by-elections, ten to be exact, either for the federal or the provincial. The C.C.F. decided to put up a candidate wherever it was felt there existed the slightest chance of success, but to no avail. In 1934, it entered the provincial elections in Ontario and Saskatchewan, succeeding in electing one member in Ontario and five in Saskatchewan, where it became the official opposition. The object was not so much immediate triumphs as it was an intensive educational campaign. This is understandable. When a political party plans to overthrow a system, either of government or of economics, and does not propose to use physical force in the coup, it must resort to education, not only education in terms of publicity and propaganda in press and pulpit, but in terms of college and university invasions with the weapons of pedagogical and professional apostleship. This the C.C.F. did with devastating results. The work of such an organization as the League for Social Reconstruction has had a tremendous influence in stimulating political thought along

the lines of Socialism and in formulating policies to induce action. By virtue of a cunning manoeuvre, the L.S.R. declares itself to be not affiliated to the C.C.F., but it admits that "members of the League have been active in working for the new political party *and in the educational work carried on by it.*" The League boasts that "its basic conclusions have been borne out by the main trends of world affairs", showing thereby that "social control" is a universal faith. It avers that it is not "frightened by labels", to which the official C.C.F., that is, the L.S.R. in action, answers bluntly, "We'll make the labels", with bayonets and bullets if need be (Mr. Winch). The League had written in 1938: "If selfish and privileged groups attempt to resist - - - they will be compelled to obey the law by all the forces at the command of the state".

### *Principles of C.C.F.*

When James Shaver Woodsworth died in 1942, at the age of 68, it is not exaggerated to say that there passed off the scene one of the shrewdest public men who ever held a place of any prominence in the political life of Canada. During his lifetime, this slender gentleman with a figure full of alertness, was able to perform some of the most delicate transubstantiations ever recorded in our history. Tearing away from the chains of Wesleyan discipline and taking refuge in personal dogmatism, or ripping the bonds of human brotherhood and setting up class against class instead of sowing peace and harmony among men of goodwill were only the sham display of his performances. What really transcended everything in his life activities was his ability to give sophistry an angelic exteriority and to wrap his Hegelian philosophy in a white cloak of spiritual and humanitarian grandeur.

The very name of the Woodsworthian political party—The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation—is a conjuring ambush. No social structure can exist without co-operation. Man as an *individual* must have the help (co-operation) of his fellowmen in order to accomplish his specific work (civilization). No system of philosophy rejects that premise. But where Mr. Woodsworth showed his subtlety is when he deliberately omitted to consider man as a *person*. With this omission, he made of man a *part* annexed to the social body, a philosophy which leads directly to the monarchical despotism of a Hobbes, or to the State-Providence of Mussolini (Fascism), or to the State-God of Hitler (Nazism). As a theologian, Mr. Woodsworth knew that the relationship between the State and the Person is the reverse of that between the

State and the Individual, but as a politician he was careful not to let the distinction pierce through. Hence his Suprasocialism camouflaged under the title "*Co-operation*". Hence his policy of complete "social control", which is the destruction of democracy in all its elements, constituents and promises. The C.C.F. would attain power via democracy, after which the door would close, leaving to the passer-by this inscription: "Behind this door, there's no hope!"

For the correct interpretation of the term "Co-operation", one has to associate it with "Rochdale", "Antigonish", "Credit Unions", and so on. The Rochdale co-operative for instance, started by mill hands one hundred years ago, now owns its own factories, as well as the resources from which it draws its raw materials.

The term "Commonwealth" is another "blind alley", in so far as it applies to the Woodsworthian system. "Commonwealth" is a term that may be used to designate various forms of government: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. Originally, however, it was used to mean a form of government without a monarchy: the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland under Oliver Cromwell. Since 1901, the six British colonies of Australia have been united into a federal state under the name, The Commonwealth of Australia. Politically, Australia is a federation of states with a republican constitution ruled over by the British sovereign. The term has also been accepted to describe the free nations of the British Empire: The British Commonwealth of Nations, which is an expression to define the relations between an imperial power and its partners.

But in the case of the C.C.F. the term "Commonwealth" has none of the meanings given above. It is a subterfuge: whatever is to be "federated" into a "commonwealth" already exists in one of the finest instruments of democratic government ever conceived by a free, democratic people. The fundamental principle of Canada's form of government—as of all democracies—is self-determination. That principle is a development of the *natural law*, which makes of man a free and sociable being. Any law enacted by man is merely *regulatory*: it either commands conformity to natural law, or condemns violation of it. Society is merely an expansion of man as an individual person; in other words, society is simply a fuller expression of human nature.

The whole history of human society is a struggle to attain the fullest possible expression of human nature. This struggle has witnessed fierce hurricanes accompanied by violence, and tre-

mendous disorders attended by revolution. As a result, society has had, in a broad sense, only two forms of government: despotism and commonalty. It has been found, however, that popular government, no matter how clumsy, has been the enduring victor.

"Commonwealth", as interpreted by Mr. Woodsworth and his present-day disciples is a revival of the primitive formula of the "survival of the fittest", or the "rule of the strongest". That is why the C.C.F. cannot conceive of a society based on the principle of the expansion of the natural law. It cannot admit of normalcy in reform because, it argues, such a process gives too much latitude and scope to the "individual", to the "private enterpriser", to the "progressive" who is willing to back his initiative with his savings, or to the man of imagination and inventiveness" who is looking for free fields in which to apply his innate qualities. It must have, not a "piecemeal" remedy for ills, but medicament by the "cure or kill" dose. Therefore, "Commonwealth" means global confiscation of property and resources, universal regimentation of productive manpower, and enslavement of community and nation. It is that and nothing else, there is no port of escape. "Socialism is not some beautiful doctrine to apply later on when we are all more ethical, or when 'human nature' has changed." (*"Democracy needs Socialism,"* page 142). Canada needs "Socialism today", because "capitalism has changed", because "democracy is incomplete", because "individualism has become too rugged." (Idem). "Socialism means not only the establishment of domestic peace on the firm basis of economic security and justice, but an opportunity for the enlistment of enthusiasm and creative effort such as Canada has never before known". (Idem, p. 140).

"The anti-communist drive in Quebec is identical with the anti-communist drive of Japan in China or Franco in Spain; it is directed against a largely imaginary monster in order to frighten the people into continual acceptance of a society which serves the purposes of established classes and interests. The real evil in Quebec is not communism, but low wages, an antiquated educational system, and uncontrolled monopolies which exploit French and English with equal impartiality. The Padlock Law is not designed to stop communism so much as to stop all independent thought and all escape from clerical control". (idem, p. 139).

### *Capitalism The Bugbear—Conclusion*

The great bugbear of the C.C.F. is "Capitalism". Capitalism has always been the "bete noire" of Socialists and of all their kindred theorists; Collectivists, Syndicalists, Saint-Simonists, Communists, and so on. But to the Socialists, Capitalism is not

what it essentially and basically is, it is what they represent it to be, what they *want* it to be, for their purpose.

Capitalism, as we know, is not specifically and exclusively that thing called "capital"; it is a combination of things, and those things are divided into two categories: *material* and *immaterial*. The *material* things are: money, land, buildings, tools, machinery, natural resources and manual labour; the *immaterial* things are intelligence, (which includes a hundred faculties) opinion, natural, moral and spiritual rights (which comprise a multitude of corollaries, such as personality, freedom, talent, initiative, justice, property, family, in short, *full life*). Production, distribution and consumption are impossible without a working union of those two categories of things. The C.C.F. admit this, they admit that this combination has existed for thousands of years, but they say, "the operation of the combination has put leadership in the wrong place", and the result has been *inequality*: inequality of power, of opportunity, of goods, of wealth, of happiness. Therefore, the C.C.F. constitute themselves the political and economic organism that will establish the correct proportions.

How do they propose to establish the correct proportions? It is the simplest thing imaginable: remove not *capital*, but the incentive for *profit*; abolish not *ownership* of capital, but *concentration* of it; destroy not *enterprise*, but the *freedom* of it and of its concomitant *competition*. And this enumeration of "controls" could be extended ad infinitum, to include every class of producer, distributor or consumer, not excepting the farmer, the fisherman, the small business man, the factory worker, the trader, the contractor, the artist, the scientist, the professor, even the preacher.

And what means do the C.C.F. propose to utilize in order to attain their objective? Again, a simple operation: the full use of the arm of political power, a power gained by democratic procedures, but applied by arbitrary and autocratic methods. One need not elaborate on how the whole machinery is put in motion. First, you must start a mental revolution. This is done by painting a horrible picture of conditions under Capitalism, by disseminating emotion and propagandizing the susceptible and the gullible. Secondly, you give a voice to these emotions, fears and hatreds: demands, threats, menaces, strikes, revolution (as a last resort). Thirdly, the Totalitarian form of government.

In conclusion, the Woodsworth-Coldwell-Socialist-C.C.F. party aims at the definite overthrow of all existing political parties in



Canada. The Socialists describe those parties as representing four distinct schools of thought, all functioning under the dictate of big business and capitalism: liberalism, fascism, creditism and corporatism. Very naturally, they reject all four, the first as too mild, the second (which incidentally is the old party of Macdonald)\* as not sufficiently interventionist, the third as unscientific, and the fourth as too provincial and nationalistic.

This leaves one school of thought: Socialism. The challenge, however, is not to be found in Socialism's arguments, but in the sophistry of its reasoning and in the passion and madness of its propagandists and of its sympathizers and partisans. There is no doubt that the trend for the past fifty years has been towards a greater state control over, and even state ownership of, certain classes of industries, as well as towards a more effective public responsibility in the matter of social issues. Canada has been moving in that very direction perhaps more rapidly than any other country in the world, and this without economic dislocation or political upheaval. The task now is to bring to its fullness the country's policy of social progress without encroachments upon existing liberties and rights, while concurrently building up its unity, its stability and its prosperity.

If Canada is, as Socialists proclaim, in need of being saved, it will be saved, not by Socialists, but by Canadians.

THE END

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\* "Fascism . . . is only a form of controlled capitalism", and the Pro-Con Party is presented as the "controlled-capitalism" school of thought).

## THE AUTHOR

FRANCIS X. CHAUVIN, M.A., is a free-lance writer, author, lecturer, educationist, historian, translator, and business executive all combined. He is a scholarly student of the classic type whose chief recreation is research work in the field of history, but he is quite at home on the executive board of the Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg Railway Company, Windsor's all-bus urban and interurban transportation system, of which he is Vice-Chairman.

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